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Cicero in the High School

BY NORMAN W. DEWITT
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Caesar said on a certain occasion: "Why shouldn't we have the pleasure of listening to a speech from Cicero, whom we have not heard for a long time?" Already his mind had been made up to convict the accused but, as Cicero proceeded, his feelings were so aroused that his face became flushed and certain papers fell from his trembling hands. The defendant was pardoned. Quintilian said that when the student found himself admiring Cicero he might know that he had made real progress. Such was the judgment of two brilliant men among the ancients.

Never since, perhaps, unless at rare intervals in English parliamentary history, or in the first half of the nineteenth century in America, has oratory played a comparable role in public life. It is now held in rather low esteem. The debates that take place upon the floors of British Parliaments or of Congress are but the noise of political machinery. The decisions upon vital issues are made in committee rooms or cabinet meetings.

Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether this fact has any bearing upon the question of Cicero in the high school. It is my experience that all Latin in the first three or four years of study is a sort of linguistic algebra, which the pupil handles with more or less adeptness as a sort of code. I have been told repeatedly by college freshmen that down to that stage of their study the import of what they read failed almost completely to register on their minds. At about this time, if ever, a sort of revelation occurs in their mentality; certain bonds seem to break and a new freedom is experienced in the movements of the intelligence. This facility increases steadily as they proceed to discuss the limitations of Livy as an historical commentator, or make acquaintance with the extremely human Cicero whom we discover in the letters. The rate of progress is slow; there are no wholesale additions to knowledge. The true objective is one of long range, with which the modern parent has little patience.

There is a saying of Aristotle that is usually translated as follows: "The roots of education are bitter but the fruits are sweet." Perhaps it would be better to say "sour" rather than "bitter." At any rate the roots can hardly be "sweet," even if hedonistic educators lean toward such a view. "Life bestows nothing upon mortals unless at the price of grievous toil," said the bore in the satire of Horace, and toil cannot be always sweet.

Nevertheless, young pupils in general do not resent reasonable compulsion and discipline. Spoiled children regard their parents with less affection and treat them with less courtesy than children who have been handled firmly and trained to diligence. It is no different with

teachers. It is the strong, positive teacher who will command loyalty and devotion, as most of us will agree if we rehearse the experience of school-days. Nor does it matter greatly what subject of instruction has fallen to such a preceptor. Geometry itself will prove interesting and popular in good hands. Greek grammar is not a delectable study in itself, but I know of a school where fifty pupils recently volunteered to enroll in a class to be instructed after school hours. The personality of the teacher rendered it interesting.

There is no constant relationship between the intrinsic interest of a subject and its genuine importance, any more than there is a constant relationship between emolument and service. The service rendered by a Hollywood actress is not more valuable than that rendered by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, but it commands a reward infinitely greater. The Ten Commandments are rather more important than a western thriller, but much less exciting. A sermon by an eminent preacher of learning, discrimination, and wisdom will not draw so large a crowd as a burning house. The recognition of these truths is of immense value to teachers of all worthwhile studies. It saves them from many disappointments and it affords them a sound basis for faith in their calling. We may achieve the goal of Latin without tears, but we shall never achieve the goal of true education without continued application and industry, and this end implies a steady pressure of discipline, which carries no thrill. Swimming lessons will always be more interesting than Latin lessons.

Having arrived at the conclusion that Latin is a subject of intrinsic value but little inherent interest, it remains for us to treat Cicero from this standpoint. It eases the problem greatly that we need not seek to choose what is most interesting in itself or seems so. The speeches for Marcellus and Ligarius are brief, and their thought and language run with a sweeping rhythm that deeply stirred the feelings of Caesar, but they have been tried and proved by experience to be no success in the classroom. The Catilinarians, on the contrary, are a bit turgid, rhetorical in the worst sense of the word, and, perhaps, in spots even forced, and yet by trial and error over centuries of instruction they have been found most serviceable in the classroom. The style is a bit staccato, which is helpful to immature minds; sentences abound in examples of the more obvious and essential points of grammar; they afford firm ground all along for the teacher who is keen to develop clear ideas in unfolding intellects. It must be borne in mind all the time that true progress is in detail, and these speeches furnish the right kind of detail in plenty. They are like Bach's compositions, which musicians play sedulously for practice, but rarely present in public.

I like the Catilinarians also because they begin like

bursts of gun-fire. While the first sentence in the Archias contains sixty-five words, the first in the Catilinarians contains but seven. On the first page of the Manilian Law there are only eight sentences; on the first page of the Catilinarians there are fifteen. This is a decisive advantage. Cicero seemed to go upon the principle, when he spoke from the Rostra, that no one heard him during the first five minutes. Hence he began with a rhythmical prelude marked by a longish swing, which was calculated to still the murmurs of the multitude and create the hush of attentiveness which is essential to the best effects. If this ponderous beginning, however, is a sedative to a multitude, it is an opiate to the classroom. The span of attention is short in young people; they are defeated and discouraged by an accumulation of phrases and clauses.

While the Manilian Law and the Archias, in my opinion, are both inferior to the Catilinarians for classroom use, the former is the better of the two. Its partitions of subject matter are so simple that, once the prelude is finished, even a youngish pupil may follow the drift, but the sentences, in general, are too long. The Archias, in my experience, always drags. It is like the ode of Horace on the Bandusian Fountain; by itself this is a gem of poesy, but what can one ask pupils about a gem? The best recourse is to ask them to memorize it. The ode to Fortune, on the other hand, though less poetical, abounds in moderate difficulties, which can be profitably studied together.

I think the *De Amicitia* excellent for college freshmen. It abounds in connectives and continuative particles, such as *quidem*, which offer abundant opportunities for steering students toward better and more precise translations. The *De Senectute* is in the same class, but less useful perhaps. For high-school pupils I do not favor either one of them.

Latin teaching, viewed over the centuries, may be seen to move in cycles, which repeat the same motives. Oral methods had a great vogue in the sixteenth century. New approaches have often been offered. Among my few old books is *A New Torch to the Latin Tongue*, dated 1663. The author is an optimist; this is his title page:

So enlightened
That besides the easie understanding of
all Classical Authors, there is also laid open
a ready way to write and speak Latine,
well and elegantly.

Being very useful for Gentlemen, Lawyers, and young
Clerks, and all others: either for Englishmen that
desire to better their knowledge in the Latine Tongue,
or for Strangers to learn and speak English.

Admiring friends wrote poems to celebrate the appearance of this textbook, of which one may be quoted:

Loe here a Stranger lights his Torch to show
Our English through the Latine paths to go;
Follow his light, it is a certain Friend,
And will conduct you to your Journey's end.
The Porch, the Threshold, (some wrote) and the Gate
Into the Tongues, to them (then) was no Mate:
But this is Porch, and Threshold, and the Door,
'Tis the whole Vatican of Latine Store.

However, at the end of every cycle, teachers return to Cicero and Caesar. All easy methods fail. Discipline is found to be indispensable. Interest is not intrinsic in the subject. It must be created.

The Bride of Hades

By R. ARBESMANN, O. S. A.
Fordham University

The "motif" of the dead bridegroom coming on horseback to his inconsolable love, and carrying her to the bridal chamber, his grave, is widely spread among the peoples of Europe. It is known to us from numerous English-Scottish, Low German, Austrian, Scandinavian and Slavic popular tales and ballads.¹ For our purpose it may suffice to mention "The Suffolk Miracle" and Buerger's "Lenore."

The "motif" itself is very old. It can already be found in the Greek drama, with one difference, it is true. Whereas in the popular tales it is the dead *man* who comes to fetch home the bride and to celebrate the ghastly wedding, in the Greek drama *Death*, Hades himself, is the dreadful bridegroom.

In Sophocles' *Antigone* the Chorus of Theban Elders deplores the ill fate of young and fair Antigone who is led forth to death and has to go to the θάλαμος, the bridal chamber, of Hades (804f.). Antigone herself bewails her destiny; for Hades, who puts to sleep everyone, leads her living to Acheron's shore; the ὑμέναιος, the nuptial procession-song, has not been sung for her by friends escorting bride and bridegroom to their home, nor has the ἐπινύμφειος ὕμνος been sung in the evening at the door of the bridal chamber, but she will wed (νυμφεύσω) Acheron, that is, Death (811ff.). She addresses her grave as νυμφεῖον (sc. δῶμα), bridal bower (891). In the same way the messenger calls Antigone's grave "the maiden's nuptial chamber with rocky couch, the caverned mansion of the bride of Death" (1204f.; cf. also ἡ παστάς, the nuptial bower, in 1207). Already before (654) Creon says to his son Haemon, who tries to save Antigone: "Let this girl find a husband (νυμφεύειν) in the house of Hades!" A similar idea is expressed in Euripides' *Orestes* (1109). Orestes, Pylades, and Electra have been sentenced to death for the crime of matricide. In order to get revenge before they die, they attempt to kill Helen, whom Pylades in this connexion calls a bride of Hades ("Αἰδὴν νυμφὸν κεκτημένη"). In another play of the same poet, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Agamemnon, inconsolable in the thought, that he will be compelled to sacrifice his own daughter, exclaims: "And the unhappy maid — why name her maid? Hades meseems shall take her soon for bride" (460f.). In the *Troades* of Euripides, Cassandra, fair daughter of Priamus and Hecuba, has been given to Agamemnon after the fall of Troy. But she prefers death to such a shame: "On, that I may hasten to the house of Hades to wed my bridegroom" (447).

The grave as θάλαμος, bridal chamber, occurs also in epigrammatic literature, so often in epitaphs on the unmarried, for instance, *Anthologia Palatina* VII 489:

Τιμάδος ἄδε κόνις, τὰν δὴ πρὸ γάμοιο θανοῦσαν
Δέξατο Περσεφόνας κυάνεος θάλαμος.

Or G. Kaibel, *Epigrammata* 241, on two young brothers:

Οἱ δισσοὶ συνόμαιμοι, ἧς ἔξενε, τῷδ' ὑπὸ τύμβῳ
Ἄψαυστοὶ τέκνων κείμεθα κουριδίῳ
Ἰκέσιος καὶ γὰρ νεαρὰν πληρούμενος ἦβαν
Ἑρμιππος κρυερὸν τόνδ' ἔχομεν θάλαμον.

¹ F. J. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Student's Cambridge Edition, Boston 1904, p. 592ff.; A. Aarne-Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folk-Tale*, FF Communications 74, Helsinki 1928, p. 61, No. 365; Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (Ind. Univ. Studies XX No. 100, Bloomington, Ind. 1933; this study is also issued as FF Communications 107, Helsinki 1933) II p. 354, No. E 215; W. Wollner, "Der Lenorenstoff in der slavischen Volkspoesie," *Arch. f. slav. Philol.* VI (1882) p. 239ff.; Ivan D. Schischmanov, "Der Lenorenstoff in der bulgarischen Volkspoesie," *Indogerm. Forschung.* IV (1894) p. 412ff.; cf. L. Ch. Wimberly, *Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads*, Chicago 1928, p. 228ff.

For Death Stalks on Apace

(Horace, *Odes*, II, 3)

Your soul unruffled, friend, in life's steep ways
Strive to maintain, and in your palmy days
From all o'er-weening joys forbear,
For death is sure to be your share,

As surely whether woe weigh down your life
Or blest, on festal days, removed from strife,
On some fresh grassy lawn you bask,
With mellowed wine from Falernian cask.

Why else do poplar limbs love to entwine
And make alluring shade with soaring pine?
Why frets the rill with waters bright
Its twisting banks in quiv'ring flight?

Bid hither bring the cups, the nard, the blooms
Of roses wet with dew, which short life dooms,
While youth and fortune still await
The Sisters dire and their threads of fate.

You soon shall quit your purchased land, your home,
Your villa washed by Tiber's yellow foam.
You'll pass; your heaps of hoarded gold,
Of all, your heir will soon lay hold.

Though sprung from ancient blood, a lord of earth,
Or be you poor, of low and humble birth,
And linger neath the open sky,
The prey of ruthless Death, you'll die.

Into a single fold we're driven one and all,
The urn spins round, the lot of each must fall;
And each in Charon's bark at last
For all eternity is cast.

West Baden College

HERMAN S. HUGHES, S. J.

The University of Texas announces its intention to hold this summer, in connection with the Summer School, a Texas Latin Teachers Institute for the purpose of vivifying and improving the teaching of Latin. This Institute will last a week, from Monday, June 12, through Saturday, June 17. A varied program is being prepared in which both language and literature receive ample attention. Particulars will be gladly furnished by Professor W. J. Battle, of the Department of Classical Languages, the University of Texas.

Of all the losses that have befallen us in Roman literature, the greatest is that which has left Livy's history imperfect.—*Niebuhr*

The Latin Leaflet, published by the University of Texas, is always stimulating. The Midyear Number, February 8, 1939, contains, in addition to a brief discussion of the Third-Year Problem, a delightful causerie by Professor Poteat, entitled "A Ciceronian Rogues' Gallery." The "rogues" are: Terentia, Curio, Clodius, Dolabella, and Mark Antony.

Your Icarus

You very probably have an Icarus in your classroom. In fact, you might perhaps have more than one if only you could tell a budding genius when you saw it. This highflier is, in a sense, the ablest student in your class. He has plenty of the exceleior urge in him, and would fly straightway to the upper regions of Greek or Latin "literature." His ambition is commendable; but, being an Icarus, he forgets that, in order to reach the higher strata, he needs indestructible wings, wings that will not melt under the scorching rays of "scholarship." The wings of literature are the languages. He would like to discourse brilliantly upon Latin or Greek, but dodges coming to grips with the Greek or Latin originals. He would eat the kernel without first cracking the shell.

Great tact is needed in dealing with this young bird trying to fly before his wings are grown. It will not do to stifle his wholesome interest in literature, but neither will it do to give him the impression that the study of language is a waste of time. Nothing remains, therefore, but to satisfy his literary hunger and at the same time put him through a severe drill in Greek or Latin grammar. His nose must be put to the grindstone.¹ With the high goal before him, even he must see that grammar is "interesting."

What Icarus needs is a wise Daedalus. In dealing with him, it is in your power to make or spoil a classical scholar of more than ordinary eminence. If he is allowed to have his own way all through the course of training, such acquaintance with literature as he may eventually acquire will be secondhand or even downright shallow. The way to literature lies through language.

"It is his (the classical teacher's) first business," says Professor Rand,² "to teach the elements of Greek and Latin and the art of reading at sight simple Greek and Latin prose." And if a knowledge of the elements is necessary for the student in high school, an even more thorough grasp of Greek or Latin grammar is indispensable to the student in college. If appreciation of literature is the great end, then knowledge of the language is the great means.

These things were well-known to the old Roman educators. In a familiar passage in Quintilian (I iv 22) the situation is somewhat different, but it will illustrate our point. Here the fault is in the teacher, the old Daedalus, who would hurry his pupils through the unpleasant details of grammar in order all the sooner to arrive at a more showy subject of study.

Nomina declinare et verba imprimis pueri sciunt, neque enim aliter pervenire ad intellectum sequentium possunt; quod etiam monere supervacuum erat, nisi ambitiosa festinatione plerique a posterioribus inciperent, et, dum ostentare discipulos circa speciosiora malunt, compendio morarentur.

"Boys should first of all learn to decline nouns and conjugate verbs; for they cannot in any other way come to understand the next subject of study. It would be superfluous even to hint at this, were it not for the fact that most teachers, prompted by an undue haste to show off their pupils' talents, begin with the later subjects, with the result that, in preferring to display their talents in connection with what is more showy, they delay their real progress."

¹ Read Fr. O'Neill's stimulating essay, "How Latin Trains the Mind," *CLASSICAL BULLETIN*, April, 1938.

² See "The First Business of the Classical Teacher," *CLASSICAL BULLETIN*, October, 1937.

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Editorial

The classical teacher is fortunate in having a wide field to roam about in when in search of the specific food or diet that will keep him fresh in his work and key him up to his best endeavor. That he needs constant refueling he will be the first to admit. To him the "humdrum of the classroom" is no unmeaning phrase: he knows only too well that he must battle against monotony—that parasite which would feed upon his energies and prey upon his enthusiasm. Happily, there are ways of meeting the foe. One such potent remedy—it may be well to remember—is to nip weariness in the bud by an occasional well-planned escape from the atmosphere of the classroom and by deliberately stepping outside the periphery of the narrow subject one is teaching. We teach Latin, but Latin is an elastic term. Beginning with the remains of old Latin—and the same is even more true of Greek—we can extend our browsing over a worth-while literature that stretches into the Middle Ages, and yet remain, somehow, within hail of the classics. With our class we are merely cultivating a particular patch in that vast garden of Latin literature. There are few languages that can boast, down the ages, such a continuity of form, and largely, too, such a continuity of spirit, as Latin and Greek. This occasional flight from the narrow classroom will stimulate curiosity, refresh the mind, and, above all, deepen and broaden our grasp of the particular subject we are teaching.

With Cassiodorus, statesman and protector of monks (c. A. D. 490-583), we are well across the threshold of the Middle Ages. It is gratifying, therefore, to see that the vocabulary of his *Institutiones divinarum et saecularium litterarum*, the work by which he is best remembered and which most profoundly influenced subsequent centuries, has been investigated by Sister Mary Gratia Ennis, School Sister of Notre Dame, Baltimore. Her dissertation is Vol. IX of "Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Latin," published by the Catholic University of America.

"Though primarily intended by Cassiodorus for the guidance of the monks of his monastery of Vivarium, the two books of the *Institutiones* . . . soon came to be used throughout the West as a standard manual." The subject matter is presented under four heads: Late Latin Vocabulary; Technical Terms; Ecclesiastical Terms; Miscellaneous Stylistic Features. Not only will *The Vocabulary of the Institutiones of Cassiodorus* become a "Fundgrube" for the student of medieval Latin, but the general reader, too, can look into it with profit. It is curious to see with what modifications old words were taken over by Christian writers and made to do duty in a sense not originally intended. Latin grew as all languages grow: new words were coined and old ones filled with a new content. We all know, of course, that classical students owe a debt of gratitude to the far-seeing statesman who instructed his monks to collect and emend manuscripts.

An interesting study in medieval Latin is *The Non-dramatic Works of Hrosvitha* by Sr. Gonsalva Wiegand (Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Indiana). The Introduction gives valuable information about the discovery by Conrad Celtes (a humanist of the fifteenth century) of "A Tenth-Century Manuscript," a short biography of Hrosvitha—the "Nightingale of Gandersheim," and a sketch of her literary career. The probable dates of the nun's birth and death are 935 and 1002. The name *Hrosvitha* has been explained by Grimm as a variation of *Hruodswind*, "the mighty voice." The convent of Gandersheim, in Braunschweig, Germany, must have been an "intellectual paradise." "Conning," says J. C. Plümpe in *America*, April 3, 1926, "the simple yet full and beautiful life of Hrosvitha, the nun-poet and dramatist, is like happening upon some calm, cool, and green-bowered haven, after a long journey in the heat and dust of a summer's day." Living in this oasis, Hrosvitha was in touch with contemporary life and literature. Her writings reveal, says the author of the dissertation, "most of the peculiarities of the age in which she lived." She had the writings of the early Middle Ages at her finger tips and, furthermore, was well-read in Horace, Ovid, Vergil, Plautus, Terence, and Lucretius. Her style shows great deviations from the classical models, her only concern being to supplant the pagan classics by her own distinctly Christian productions. Sr. Gonsalva's book contains both the original and a pleasing prose translation of: *The Maria, The Ascension of Our Lord, The Gongolfus, The Pelagius, The Theophilus, The Basilus, The Dionysius, The Agnes*—a total of 3488 lines. Each selection is followed by brief exegetical notes.

The following may serve as a specimen of Hrosvitha's at times rugged Latinity and Sr. Gonsalva's rendering:

Ad Gerbergam

Salve, regalis prolis clarissima stirpis,
Gerbig, illustris moribus et studiis.
Accipe fronticula, dominatrix alma, serena,
Quae tibi purganda offero carminula,
Eius et incultos dignanter dirige stichos,
Quam doctrina tua instruit egregia;
Et, cum sis certe vario lassata labore,
Ludens dignare hos modulos legere;
Hanc quoque sordidulam tempta purgare camenam
Ac fulcire tui flore magisterii,

Quo laudem dominae studium supportet alumnae
Doctrinæque pia carmina discipulae.

Dedication to Gerberga

Hail, illustrious offspring of a royal race, Gerberga, renowned for thy character and thy learning! Fostering Mistress, do thou accept with kindly mien these little verses which I offer for thy correction; and do thou graciously direct the crude measures of her whom thine excellent precepts instruct. And when thou art indeed wearied with thy manifold labors, do thou deign to recreate thyself in the conning of those measures, and attempt to purify the unlovely muse and to uphold her by the prestige of thine office.

Thus may the zeal of the pupil enhance the praise of the Mistress, and the poems of the devoted disciple, the praise of the teacher.

Festina lente is a good motto for the classroom. *Festina*: "Be progressive." Progress is the pulse of education. The boys and girls of today are not the same they were yesterday. Old Heraclitus' dictum, "You never step twice into the same river," gives classic expression to this feeling. The students of today see more, they hear more, they are startlingly more free in forming and expressing opinions than we were when we settled down to *mensa mensae*. Human nature is the same, but the modern pupil, somehow, is more in contact with "the world." He wants a fresh, and a different, approach. And so, as we grow older in years, we must in reality grow younger in vitality if we would keep step with each new class. As an experienced teacher used to say: "I never go into the classroom without overhauling the subject matter afresh each time I present it, no matter how often I have taught it before." For some, this constant readjustment to the individual needs of the younger generation is the real *crux* of their teaching.

Festina, therefore: "Be up and about to improve your method of teaching"; but *lente*: "Move slowly just the same in departing from the well-tried methods of the past." Do not fancy every novelty just because it is novel. Possibly "the old is better."

Nuggets of the purest ore are easy to dig up from the educational experiences of the past. Train your class in fundamentals; this is your business, not that of your successor. Drill your class in all essentials, and do not be overnarrow in delimiting what is essential. A little overplus does no harm. Make sure that your pupils master the declensions, the conjugations, and whatever else comes under the term "Inflection." The young mind needs as much inflection as the Latin words do. Drill the class, by copious examples, both in reading Latin sentences aloud and in forming sentences of their own. That will be the pupil's initiation into elementary syntax. Compel him to express himself in simple Latin: ability to do so begets a sense of power that invites continuing the study of Latin. "Imitating" the old forms of expression even when the thought is new gives a sense of freedom: without it, the student is a drudge. Insist on accuracy of detail; do not tolerate sloppy habits of speech, whether in stating a rule or in translating into or from Latin. The mind-training power of Latin is an empty boast unless it is secured through precision. Do not make the students thumb their grammar: the briefest references to it are all that is needed. The student's best grammar is the ancient author or Yourself. Make him at home in his Exercise Book or his Reader. Follow this

rigid program, regardless of how soon your pupil quits school: the shorter the time during which you can train his mind, the more intensive must such training be; this and nothing else, will train him "for life." All these imperatives, if success is aimed at, are categorical.

This foundation laid, and not until then, put your class in touch with REAL Latin. There is a time for everything: first, grammar; then, literature. Quintilian scores those unwise teachers who, in their eagerness to come to the sweets of literature, neglect to ground their pupils in grammar. When the time comes for real Latin, it will not matter much whether the first contact is made through Phaedrus or Eutropius or Nepos or Ovid. What counts is that the pupil should learn how to follow the consecutive thoughts of a writer who used Latin at first hand.

Ad Pium XII Studia Pacis Commendantem

Laetamur omnes, Sancte Pater, tuam
Vocem audientes, propositi tenax
Pacis ferendae orbi gementi
Cum documenta salutis urges.

"Christi," mones tu, "pax stabilis datur,
Si cor tenetur crimine liberum,
Sancto domus fervore fulget,
Se populi sociant amore."

A. F. G.

Da, Domine, Propitius Pacem

Da, Domine, propitius pacem in diebus nostris, ut, ope misericordiae tuae adiuti, et a peccato simus semper liberi et ab omni perturbatione securi.

Deus, a quo sancta desideria, recta consilia, et iusta sunt opera: da servis tuis illam, quam mundus dare non potest, pacem; ut et corda nostra mandatis tuis dedita et, hostium sublata formidine, tempora sint tua protectione tranquilla.

Deus, auctor pacis et amator, quem nosse, vivere, cui servire, regnare est: protege ab omnibus impugnationibus supplices tuos; ut qui in defensione tua confidimus, nullius hostilitatis arma timeamus. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

(Ex *Missali Romano*)

Virgil and a Letter of Gerard Manley Hopkins, S. J.

In a letter of Father Hopkins, the well-known English poet, quoted in the *New York Times*, July 10, 1938, there seems to be a reminiscence of some verses of the sixth eclogue.

We were all vaccinated the other day. The next day a young Portuguese came up to me and said: "Oh Mither 'Opkins, do you feel the cows in yewer arm?" I told him *I felt the horns coming through*. I do I am sure. I cannot remember now whether one ought to say the calf of the arm or the calf of the leg. My shoulder is like a shoulder of beef. *I dare not speak above a whisper for fear of bellowing*—there now, I was going to say I am obliged to speak low for fear of lowing.

The verses of Virgil describe the sensations of the daughters of Proetus when they, owing to their impiety, were changed into cows:

Proetides implerunt falsis mugitibus agros,
at non tam turpes pecudum tamen ulla secuta est
concupitus, quamvis collo timuisset aratrum,
et saepe in levi quaesisset cornua fronte.

Fordham University

JOHN J. SAVAGE

Cicero and Caesar, Sallust and Livy, Seneca and Tacitus, betray themselves in their sentence structure.
—Tenney Frank

Round-Table Discussion of Professor Oldfather's Paper on Cicero

[See the May number of the CLASSICAL BULLETIN]

I

In general I agree with Professor Oldfather.

1. The Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum*¹ called for Cicero's *Letters*, *De Senectute*, and *De Amicitia*. We have put in four years of Cicero's speeches. I have protested this for more than 30 years.

2. Several of Professor Oldfather's remarks seem to imply that we study Cicero for history, ethics, etc. The *Ratio* studies him to learn composition. One can study sculpture from a clay statue as well as from a gold statue.

3. The distinction between a written and a spoken speech I have discussed in *Literature, the Leading Educator*.² Most of Cicero's speeches are written, especially the *Milo*.

4. There are several *non sequitur*'s in Professor Oldfather's paper. If we avoid the classics because parts are not good or true, then we give them all up—pagan, etc. Not so the Fathers of the Church. See Père Daniel.³

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¹ [See, for instance, *St. Ignatius and the Ratio Studiorum*, edited by Edward A. Fitzpatrick (McGraw-Hill; 1933); *Principles of Jesuit Education in Practice*, by Francis P. Donnelly, S. J. (Kenedy; 1934); *The Jesuits and Education*, by W. J. McGucken, S. J. (Bruce; 1932).]

² [Published by Longmans, Green and Co. 1938.]

³ [The French educators (Abbé Gaume; L. Veuillot; etc.) who regarded the pagan spirit of the classics as *le ver rongeur des sociétés modernes* and demanded that the Fathers of the Church be substituted for them, were effectively answered by Bishop Dupanloup and Père Daniel, S. J. See the latter's *Des Etudes Classiques dans la Société Chrétienne*; Paris, 1853.]

II

I find myself substantially in harmony with Professor Oldfather in his comments on "What to Read of Cicero" in the May number of the CLASSICAL BULLETIN. Let me rehearse the points of agreement. (1) You will never be a Latinist unless you have read Cicero plentifully and reflectively, but, of course, not very many are seeking to be Latinists. (2) Cicero as a statesman was pretty thoroughly cowed by the aristocratic magnificence of his senatorial associates and "fanatically adhered" to the system, corrupt and outworn, that they represented; he called it *concordia ordinum* (omitting, of course, the *ordo plebeius*). He makes me think always of Ramsay MacDonald after the duchesses captured him, the *novus homo*, for the British Tory party. (3) Cicero could be, and not seldom was, an unelevated special pleader, as in the egregious *Pro Milone*. However, the ethics of the lawyer in relation to such affairs appears to stand apart from ordinary morals in all ages. (4) Very few good orations read well, and it is entirely probable, as Professor Oldfather urges, that the better they read, the less successful they were as speeches. As a number of Cicero's speeches are dull reading — except for the Latinist to be — I am almost forced to conclude that they must have been good speaking. (5) Personally I have always trembled on contemplating the amount of political background required to understand a speech of

Cicero's, and have always got over the trembling only by deciding to omit 90 per cent. of it, and to concentrate the attention of the student on the *use of language* and the *brief-structure*. The more intelligent get the idea and seem to like it. (6) I have myself dealt with tempo in the April number of the BULLETIN. I seem to have anticipated Professor Oldfather's feelings on that point.

Finally, and though this is point (7) I move it into a separate paragraph, Cicero's greatest value today (apart from the formation of a Latinist) is to be found in his ethical and philosophical works. I also attach the highest importance to the *De Officiis*; if you want to get the Roman view of character, to understand the *disciplina Romana*, there it is. Yet on the other hand young people are rather bored by ethical and philosophical essays; *De Senectute* is good reading for me at sixty but not very enlivening or enlivable at twenty, and no rationalizing of friendship is required at twenty through a *De Amicitia*. I am forced therefore to feel that Cicero should be approached through selections, not for the future Latinist, of course, but for the generality. The *Letters* (not the smart political ones), the *De Officiis* and the *De Natura Deorum*, narrative portions from the *Verrines*, the *Archias*, the *Manilian Law*¹ (for reasons urged by me last year), but one *In Catilinam* at most (probably the third), and not the *Milo* nor the *Second Philippic*,—that is the pabulum for the generality. Only the rare teacher can galvanize into life the bulk of Cicero's oratory. I am glad that Professor Oldfather has spoken out loud in class and given us a few home thrusts on the subject.

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¹ [See the writer's paper, *De Imperio*, THE CLASSICAL BULLETIN, March, 1938.]

III

Professor Oldfather's animadversions always attract attention and his latest lucubration on "What to Read of Cicero in High School and College and Why," which appeared in the May issue of this BULLETIN, deserves discussion.

Earlier exponents of the value and of the validity of Cicero's speeches in the curricula of our schools and colleges have expressed with eloquence their estimates in the previous numbers of this BULLETIN during this year. Without repeating their recent reasons, the present writer wishes to offer his opinion in opposition to Professor Oldfather's objection to the orations.

With much of Professor Oldfather's outburst some will sympathize and particularly with regard to what to read of Cicero in school. These have long lamented the subjection of secondary school students to Cicero's speeches, any one of which "effectively designed in the first instance for a mere hour, and often for less, is now dribbled along with a medicine-dropper over a couple of months!" Here may well be substituted (as Professor Oldfather proposes) "deep draughts of *De Officiis*,"—the treatise termed by Frederick the Great "the best work on ethics which has been or will be written." Slow study of such a subject does not impair invidiously its intrinsic interest.

But when Professor Oldfather objects that "in general far too much time is spent upon Cicero's orations" and wonders "Who really reads speeches and orations, at least in our own time?" and supports his stand with interesting illustrations, one must enter an exception in the case of the college. With signal success college-courses in Cicero's speeches have been and are conducted. The serious student sees something worth-while in the first speech against Verres (with the *Divinatio*, so to speak, its frontispiece), the discourse on the Manilian Law, the pleas for Sextus Roscius, Cluentius, Murena, Archias, Caelius, Milo, and Marcellus, the four diatribes against Catiline, and the second Philippic against Antony. And two of these (as we know) were never delivered! Nor need a speech be studied in short sections day by day. College students can satisfactorily prepare an assignment of three pages for an hour's recitation in class. A class can cover competently and comfortably in a single semester—to consider only one combination—*Pro Archia*, *Pro Caelio*, *Pro Milone*, and still take time to canvass with adequate attention the structure and the language and the style of the speeches as well as the legal procedure, the technical details, the political aspects, the conduct of the cases. Again, conceding for argument's sake Professor Oldfather's contention that "the orations against Catiline are full of shameful, special pleading," why cannot the college teacher of Cicero consider with his class the Catilinarian conspiracy in its context by combining with these speeches at least Sallust's partisan pamphlet on the plot and thus contribute a critical construction of the crisis of Cicero's consulate?

And, finally, because "orations were never really read, even in antiquity," to refuse to read them today is ridiculous and reveals a remarkable reversal of reasoning on Professor Oldfather's part. On the same showing, then, we should not read ancient drama, for instance, because drama also "in those days was *viva voce* recitation" and much of it acted with musical accompaniment. Moreover, what is Professor Oldfather's opinion of Cicero's claim that "most of the orations which we now have were written not before they were delivered but some time afterward" (*Brutus* 24.91)? And what purpose did such a practice serve? Surely that the Romans should read them. And read them they did, if we do not doubt Cicero who writes in his *Orator* (37.130) that the qualities in which his success as a speaker is seen appear in his orations even when read. And why did Cicero consider it worth-while to translate Aeschines' *Contra Ctesiphontem* and Demosthenes' *De Corona*, if he did not feel that his fellow-Romans would read his rendering of these orations which he regarded as most representative of the Greek genius in this *genre*? And how does Professor Oldfather think that those enrolled in classes of elocution practice the art and the science of oratory, since the institution of such instruction, if not by study of speeches?

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P. R. COLEMAN-NORTON

IV

It seems to me that Professor Oldfather, somewhat in the manner of Shaw, has jolted us moderns back into

the problems which exercised the genius of Basil and Jerome. These early Christian scholars, you will remember, saw most clearly that the complete cyclorama of Greco-Roman civilization represented in rather definite formulae a way of life, a way of thought, and a way of expression.

The ancient "way of life," for all its superb polish, Basil and Jerome called paganism, because it was perverse. This perversity of their predecessors they supplanted with an incomparably superior *modus vivendi* founded on a Christian code of morals. The polish they incorporated as a humane code of manners to adorn the new civilization they helped to construct.

The ancient "way of thought" and the ancient "way of expression" Basil and Jerome recognized as classical literature; *classical*, because the developed art forms of their pagan predecessors had attained an excellence so nearly perfect as to remain forever the model and the despair of all imitators. Against the pious iconoclasm of some early converts they defended at their peril and preserved for posterity the written heirlooms of the Western world.

This *depositum calami* was thereafter to form the subject matter of an integrated system of classical education designed to train the youth of tomorrow in the difficult discipline of the way of human thought and the way of human expression. This tradition was by purpose and in practice a predominantly *literary* tradition with its canons of creation and of criticism. It never was an essentially *moral* tradition, orientated towards conduct and a personalist ethic. Which is not to say that the masterpieces of literary art were not the more appreciated because they frequently revealed the *anima naturaliter Christiana*; it is merely to insist that it was primarily a tradition of aesthetics, not ethics.

Traditional pedagogy, furthermore, has always been a method of analysis, crisis, and synthesis: an integral process of comprehension, criticism, and composition. With the requisite qualifications, one may say that the classical education of tradition is one of form not content, of expression not exhortation, of composition not conduct. If this tradition regards Cicero as a model, the reverence is altogether alien to religion and restricted to reading and writing.

It is, therefore, something of a shock to discover a plethora of moral epithets in a paper presumably in the literary tradition. It would seem that "chicanery, decency, fair play, the wrong, shameful, edifying, sensible and manly," as exclusively *moral* criteria, are malapropos in rating specimens of *literary* craftsmanship or in assessing their value as instruments of mental discipline. I am, therefore, not convinced by Professor Oldfather's strictures upon the current Cicero curriculum.

What to think and what to say about the persistent problems of human conduct is the province of authentic religion; how to think and how to express our thoughts is the purpose of literary training. It may be that the store of genuine moral inspiration is running low in the minds of American youth. But, in that event, I cannot deem it wise to offer them the imperfect pabulum of a superseded B. C. ethic.

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Vol. XV

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No. 9

I. INDEX OF ARTICLES*

- Achilles' Dependence on the Gods, A. M. Zamara, S. J. 21.
 Augustan Year in Rome, The, Sister Mary Jerome, I. H. M. 6.
 Book Reviews:
 "The Clarendon Latin Course," (Clendon, Vince), 45; "General Principles of Language," (Blancké), 44; "The Jesuit Code of Liberal Education," (Farrell), 47; "Lectures on Language and Linguistic Method in School," (Laurie), 52; "Legamus Liberi: A Latin Reader for Pupils of the Third Grade," (Sister Imm.), 12; "Literature, the Leading Educator," (Donnelly), 3; "Liturgical Latin," (Kuhnmuensch), 45; "The Non-dramatic Works of Hrosvitha," (Wiegand), 68; "The Oxford Book of Greek Verse in Translation," (Higham, Bowra), 55; "Portrait of Socrates," (Livingstone), 48; "Sammlung lateinischer und griechischer Schulausgaben," (Kurfess, Schaal), 37; "The Study of English Literature," (Cowardin, More), 11; "Teaching First-Year Latin," (Hill), 51; "The Vocabulary of the Institutiones of Cassiodorus," (Ennis), 68.
 Bride of Hades, The, R. Arbesmann, O. S. A. 66.
 Campion's Last Words, Edmund, Francis A. Preuss, S. J. 48.
 Christian Latin, James A. Kleist, S. J. 5.
 Cicero at the College of Saint Teresa, Sister M. Pascal. 23.
 Cicero at Marygrove, Sister Mary Jerome. 32.
 Cicero at Mundelein College, Sister Mary Donald, B. V. M. 55.
 Cicero, The Case for, (I), (II), Joseph T. Clark, S. J. 37, 46.
 "Cicero's Character," H. J. Leon. 27.
 Cicero's Character, A Side Light on, B. W. Mitchell. 10.
 Cicero Course, The Overplus in a, Maynet Thomas Baley. 42.
 Cicero—the Expounder of His Own Art, Francis A. Sullivan, S. J. 33.
 Cicero in Third High, Shall We Study?, Charles A. Tonsor. 17.
 Cicero in the High School, Norman W. DeWitt. 65.
 Cicero in High School and College, What to Read of, and Why, William Abbott Oldfather. 61.
 Cicero in Our Secondary Schools, Friedrich Solmsen. 35.
 Ciceronis Morte, De, James A. Kleist, S. J. 23.
 Cicero's Orations, P. R. Coleman-Norton. 53.
 Cicero, Our Selections from, Sister Mary Inez, S. N. D. 40.
 Cicero the Pleader, John Edmund Barss. 19.
 Cicero, The Reading of: Why and What?, B. W. Mitchell. 9.
 Cicero's Speed of Delivery, William Hardy Alexander. 50.
 Cicero Teacher, One Practical Hint for the, (E), James A. Kleist, S. J. 60.
 Cicero, Why Study?, Hubert McNeill Poteat. 25.
 Diem Domini Nostri Natalem, In, (P), A. F. Geyser, S. J. 29.
 Discussion of Professor Oldfather's Paper: F. P. Donnelly, S. J. 70; W. H. Alexander. 70; P. R. Coleman-Norton. 71; J. T. Clark, S. J. 71.
 Downing, George, and Classical Study, John J. Savage. 59.
 English Done Into Latin, Francis A. Preuss, S. J. 15.
 Ever-living Latin, The, Sister M. Thérèse, O. S. B. 41.
 Fratres Coadiutores, Ad, (P), A. F. Geyser, S. J. 56.
 Gospel Epic in the Making, The, Sister Marie Helene. 26.
 Greek Elegiac Poets, The World of the, E. L. Highbarger. 38.
 Greek Poetry in Translation, Francis A. Preuss, S. J. 55.
 Homeric Academy of Regis High School, The, W. J. B., S. J. 2.
 Juvenius, "A Minor Virgil," Sister Marie Helene. 57.
 "Latin, Four or Even Six or Eight Years of," Sister Agnes de Sales Molyneux. 10.
 Latin in the Sixth Grade, Sister Agnes de Sales Molyneux. 24.
 "Latin—More Warmly Human," Sister Agnes de Sales Molyneux. 15.
 Latin Can Do, What, Charles A. Tonsor. 55.
 Liturgical Latin, An Experiment in Pre-, Sister Agnes de Sales Molyneux. 7.
 Mary Magdalene in Easter Hymnody, Sister M. Palmyre, I. H. M. 49.
 Parerga, J. O'Donovan, S. J. 16.
 Philology for the High-School Teacher, Comparative, Chauncey Edgar Finch. 13.
 Pium XII, Ad, (P), A. F. Geyser, S. J. 62.
 Plato and Age Limit, Edgar R. Smothers, S. J. 56.
 Poet's Land of Dreams, A, (P), Raymond V. Schoder, S. J. 4.
 Princeps Pacis Pacem Reperit, (P), Francis A. Preuss, S. J. 62.
 Quo Tenditis Ultra, Linguarum Doctores?, Wilton W. Blancké. 30.
 "Remains of Old Latin," James A. Kleist, S. J. 14.
 Seminarista Precatur Mariam, (P), Cornelius Horn. 11.

- Servius and the Latin Teacher, Edna Wiegand. 62.
 Sing Me the Man, Charles Christopher Mierow. 1.
 "Sprachgefühl," James A. Kleist, S. J. 27.
 "Undiscover'd Country, The," John J. Savage. 56.
 Virgil and a Letter of Gerard Manley Hopkins, S. J., John J. Savage. 69.
 Wrath of Achilles Dramatized, The, L. D. 3.

II. INDEX OF CONTRIBUTORS

- Agnes de Sales, Sister: *An Experiment in Pre-Liturgical Latin*, 7; *"Four or Even Six or Eight Years of Latin"*, 10; *Latin in the Sixth Grade*, 24; *"Latin—More Warmly Human"*, 15.
 Alexander, William Hardy: *Cicero's Speed of Delivery*, 50; *Discussion of Professor Oldfather's Paper*, 70.
 Arbesmann, R.: *The Bride of Hades*, 66.
 Baley, Maynet Thomas: *The Overplus in a Cicero Course*, 42.
 Barss, John Edmund: *Cicero the Pleader*, 19.
 Blancké, Wilton W.: *Quo Tenditis Ultra, Linguarum Doctores?*, 30.
 Clark, Joseph T.: *The Case for Cicero (I), (II)*, 37, 46; *Discussion of Professor Oldfather's Paper*, 71.
 Coleman-Norton, P. R.: *Cicero's Orations*, 53; *Discussion of Professor Oldfather's Paper*, 71.
 DeWitt, Norman W.: *Cicero in the High School*, 65.
 Distler, Paul F.: *"The Jesuit Code of Liberal Education,"* (Farrell), (R), 47.
 Donald, Sister Mary: *Cicero at Mundelein College*, 55.
 Donnelly, Francis P.: *Discussion of Professor Oldfather's Paper*, 70.
 Finch, Chauncey Edgar: *Comparative Philology for the High-School Teacher*, 13.
 Geyser, A. F.: *Ad Fratres Coadiutores*, (P), 56; *Ad Pium XII*, (P), 62; *In Diem Domini Nostri Natalem*, (P), 29.
 Helene, Sister Marie: *The Gospel Epic in the Making*, 26; *Juvenius, "A Minor Virgil"*, 57.
 Highbarger, E. L.: *The World of the Greek Elegiac Poets*, 38.
 Horn, Cornelius: *Seminarista Precatur Mariam*, (P), 11.
 Inez, Sister Mary: *Our Selections from Cicero*, 40.
 Jerome, Sister Mary: *The Augustan Year in Rome*, 6; *Cicero at Marygrove*, 32.
 Kleist, James A.: *"The Clarendon Latin Course,"* (Clendon, Vince), (R), 45; *Christian Latin*, 5; *De Ciceronis Morte*, 23; *An Excellent Book for Classical Teachers: "The Study of English Literature,"* (Cowardin, More), (R), 11; *"General Principles of Language,"* (Blancké), (R), 44; *"Lectures on Language and Linguistic Method in School,"* (Laurie), (R), 52; *"Legamus Liberi: A Latin Reader for Pupils of the Third Grade,"* (Sister Imm.), (R), 12; *"Liturgical Latin,"* (Kuhnmuensch), (R), 45; *One Practical Hint for the Cicero Teacher*, (E), 60; *"Remains of Old Latin,"* 14; *"Sammlung lateinischer und griechischer Schulausgaben,"* (Kurfess, Schaal), (R), 37; *"Sprachgefühl,"* 27; *"The Vocabulary of the Institutiones of Cassiodorus,"* (Ennis), (R), 68.
 Korfmacher, William Charles: *"Teaching First-Year Latin,"* (Hill), (R), 51.
 Leon, H. J.: *"Cicero's Character,"* 27.
 Mierow, Charles Christopher: *Sing Me the Man*, 1.
 Mitchell, B. W.: *A Side Light on Cicero's Character*, 10; *The Reading of Cicero: Why and What?*, 9.
 North, Robert G.: *"Portrait of Socrates,"* (Livingstone), (R), 48.
 O'Donovan, J.: *Parerga*, 16.
 Oldfather, William Abbott: *What to Read of Cicero in High School and Why*, 61.
 Palmyre, Sister M.: *Mary Magdalene in Easter Hymnody*, 49.
 Pascal, Sister M.: *Cicero at the College of Saint Teresa*, 23.
 Poteat, Hubert McNeill: *Why Study Cicero?*, 25.
 Preuss, Francis A.: *Edmund Campion's Last Words*, 48; *English Done Into Latin*, 15; *Greek Poetry in Translation*, 55; *"Literature, the Leading Educator,"* (Donnelly), (R), 3; *Princeps Pacis Pacem Reperit*, (P), 62; *"The Oxford Book of Greek Verse in Translation,"* (Higham, Bowra), (R), 55.
 Savage, John J.: *George Downing and Classical Study*, 59; *"The Undiscover'd Country,"* 56; *Virgil and a Letter of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, S. J., 69.
 Schoder, Raymond V.: *A Poet's Land of Dreams*, (P), 4.
 Smothers, Edgar R.: *Plato and the Age Limit*, 56.
 Solmsen, Friedrich: *Cicero in Our Secondary Schools*, 35.
 Thérèse, Sister M.: *The Ever-living Latin*, 41.
 Tonsor, Charles A.: *Shall We Study Cicero in Third High?*, 17; *What Latin Can Do*, 55.
 Wiegand, Edna: *Servius and the Latin Teacher*, 62.
 Zamara, A. M.: *Achilles' Dependence on the Gods*, 21.

* P = Poem; R = Review; E = Editorial.

